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SUBJECT: GENERAL DEBATE CONTINUES: CUBA AND MYANMAR SPEAK

¶1. SUMMARY: The eleventh plenary meeting of the 64th UN general assembly was held on the morning of September 28. The following countries spoke: San Marino, Namibia, Peru, Myanmar, Mexico, Bahrain, Cuba, Tunisia, Eritrea; Syria; Niger; Sudan; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Oman; Belize; Singapore; Hungary; Bhutan. The themes of the economic crisis, climate change and United Nations reform, specifically the expansion of permanent members of the security council continued. Cuba spoke against the economic embargo and blamed these policies for much of its economic problems. Myanmar spoke against UN sanctions. Full text of statements is available at un.org/ga/64/generaldebate, video archives are at un.org/webcast/2009html.

¶2. Myanmar Foreign Minister Thein Sein discussed the economic crisis and stated that the developing countries are the hardest hit. Thein Sein called on the developed countries to increase their Overseas Development Assistance to the developing world. He then addressed sanctions against Myanmar stating they have "no moral basis as they not only hinder the economic and social development of the people but also interfere in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the country." He blamed these on "powerful nations" who want to pressure developing countries. Thein Sein discussed his country's new constitution and the planned elections. He stated that "democracy cannot be imposed from the outside, and a system suitable for Myanmar can only be born out of Myanmar society."

¶3. Cuban Foreign Minister Parrilla, after briefly mentioning climate change and the economic crisis, blasted the United States for the embargo on Cuba. He described it as a "unilateral aggression that should be unilaterally terminated." He stated that Cuba had hoped that after the "infamous legacy of the George W. Bush regime had been sunk in repudiation" relations would improve between the United States and Cuba. He then went on to list the ways that the embargo was hurting Cuba: restricted travel by Cubans and Americans, freezing of funds by the Treasury, banning of Cuban exports and restricting third country vessels that dock in Cuba from going to the U.S. ports. He called for a release of the "five Cuban anti terrorism fighters." On Honduras, Parrilla advocated for a return of the constitutionally elected President but also attacked the U.S. stating that "the American fascist right, represented by Cheney, openly

supports and sustains the coup." He objected to US military bases in Columbia, stating that they are "threatening the revolutionary and progressive processes, particularly the Bolivarian Revolution in the sister nation of Venezuela." He said the economic crisis will cause an increase in world hunger.

¶4. Mexico Foreign Minister Cantellano discussed the economic crisis, climate change, Security Council reform and the constitutional crisis in Honduras. She stated that Mexico supports the adoption of development financing and the finalization of the Doha Round. She warned of the food crisis and how it can affect the Millennium Development Goals. Mexico supports "solutions that increase the representativeness of the Council, translate into better accountability and does not jeopardize its efficacy." Cantellano called for the dialogue on Honduras to continue with the OAS toward a return of the constitutional government. Peru Foreign Minister Belaunde echoed the call for president Zeleya's return in Honduras. Belaunde called for "dialogue that leads to the re-establishment of the democratic system." He stated the issue of the human rights of migrants stating that it is a tool for development for both the origin and host countries. He also mentioned the economic crisis, climate change and drug trafficking in the region.

¶5. San Marino Foreign Minister Mularoni addressed UN reform stating that the General Assembly needed to be revitalized within the "global governance system." Mularoni praised the adoption in 2006 of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and cautioned that human rights must be respected in all levels of society. Namibia Foreign Minister Hausiku, echoing the AU position, raised the issue of security council seats for Africa. He also called for a lifting of the economic embargo of Cuba.

¶6. Bahrain Foreign Minister Al Khalifa discussed the Arab - Israeli conflict stating that "its sad legacy of misery and human suffering envenoms international and regional relations." Al Khalifa called for a two state solution based on equal security for all the nations of the region. He called on the international community, particularly "the most influential leading powers" to exert influence to have Israel dismantle all of the illegal settlements. On Iran, he called for the nuclear program to be confronted in a manner to "spare our region the threat of confrontation". Tunisia Foreign Minister Addallah noted the United States stance on the Middle East issue, specifically the two state solution, and called on Israel to withdrawal from the "occupied Syrian Golan and remaining Lebanese lands." Abdallah stressed the reform of the UN, stating that Africa needed equitable geographical representation within the United Nations. He addressed how the youth are being affected by the economic crisis. Tunisia also supported the lifting of the Cuban embargo.

¶7. Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh supported the reengineering of the United Nations as the world has "been hijacked to serve the interest of the few." He insisted that increasing the number of seats in the Security Council would help reform the world order.

¶8. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moualem spent most of his address criticizing Israel for defying the Security Council, its friends and allies, and the will of the international community. Furthermore, he called on Israel to submit itself to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) review and to adhere to the Non Proliferation Treaty. Al-Moualem described the situation in Iraq as a serious concern for Syria and condemned all terrorist acts in Iraq while denying any Syrian involvement in the events. He supported Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia in their efforts for peace and unity and called for the removal of the sanctions on Cuba.

¶9. Niger Foreign Minister Aichatou Mindaoudou voiced the concerns of the African Union to avoid the inappropriate use of universal jurisdiction. She asked for a more inclusive

and transparent system to deal with global problems such as climate change, food security, the financial crisis, and conflict resolution.

¶10. Sudanese Adviser to the President Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Atabani, as Chairman of the Group of 77, criticized the absence of democracy in international relations, particularly in the Security Council. He commented on how the Palestine issue has negatively affected the image of the United Nations. Atabani welcomed President Obama's speech and hoped that it will be turned into positive actions such as the removal of sanctions and Sudan from the terror list.

¶11. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Foreign Minister Alexis Thambwe Mwamba described the Middle East situation as tenuous and was concerned about the status of Iraq and Afghanistan. He noted there has been progress on many issues in Africa: political dialogue in the Central African Republic, neighborly exchanges between Chad and Sudan, and the ceasefire in Burundi. Mwamba observed that a post-Kyoto agreement was needed and commended Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the September 22 Summit on Climate Change. He appealed for Security Council reform, such as adding an African country as a permanent member to reflect the political and numerical weight of Africa in the United Nations. Mwamba explained that DRC is improving but called for justice with regards to sexual crimes against DRC girls and women.

¶12. Oman Foreign Minister Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah called for a just resolution to the Palestine-Israel dispute and welcomed recent positive developments in Iraq. He supported the Darfur peace talks and Somalia's efforts to achieve peace and saw positive signs towards a diplomatic solution between the "friendly Islamic Republic of Iran" and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

¶13. Belize Foreign Minister Wilfred Elrington explained that the economic crisis is just now reaching his country and Belize is experiencing declining levels of revenue, diminishing remittances, and a reduction in productivity. According to Elrington, the current "club model" international system (the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and WTO) is facing a crisis of legitimacy and can no longer be governed by just a few nations. He worried about climate change and saw it as a formidable challenge. He called for an end to the embargo on Cuba and for more inclusion for Taiwan.

¶14. Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo commented that the global outlook is not as bleak today as it was last year. He warned against protectionism and against government intervention in markets as that could lead to more risk taking. Yeo recommended the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and said a balance needs to be struck between inclusiveness and effectiveness.

¶15. Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Balazs urged member nations not to let the economic crisis distract them from their MDG obligations. He called for a comprehensive strategy to address climate change at Copenhagen. Balazs reaffirmed Hungary's support for the sovereignty of Georgia, stabilization in Afghanistan, non-proliferation and a two state solution in the Middle East. He described Iran's nuclear program as a serious concern "in flagrant violation of its international obligations." Balazs advocated for human rights, as a newly elected member of the Human Rights Council, and for the rights of minorities.

¶16. Bhutan Foreign Minister Daw Penjo said Bhutan's successful transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy is in need of nurturing and strengthening and highlighted successes such as an average eight percent GDP growth, 60 percent literacy rate, and 90 percent health coverage. Bhutan will chair the April 2010 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meeting which will focus on climate change. Penjo advocated expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council,

specifically adding the following as permanent members India,
Japan, Brazil, Germany and two African countries.
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